

How many babies were born in Post Office Box 1663?

January 1, 2017



Note: During the earliest years of wartime Los Alamos, the town was a “secret city.” As part of those security efforts, any mail going to Los Alamos was addressed to P.O. Box 1663, Santa Fe. This address was also used on birth certificates for babies born during those years. So children weren’t really born in a post office box—it just sounded like they were.

The answer from our Gordon McDonough, Science Evangelist:

This question sent us to Alan Carr, the Lab’s historian, asking for help. I received the following from him, and I am astounded! The 80 babies delivered in the first year would mostly have been conceived off “the hill” (outside of Los Alamos). The Manhattan Project arrived here in March of 1943. Many of the rest would have been the result of local efforts.

Via Alan:

*I haven’t been able to find an exact number, but you might find this quote from Jon Hunner’s book, *Inventing Los Alamos* (p. 39), helpful: “Eighty babies were born the*

first year, and ten newborns arrived every month thereafter.” That’s essentially a shade fewer than 300 babies born “in” Box 1663 during the war.

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